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ABSTRACT

Explored were feelings of envy, warmth, and fear that children experience toward boys and girls engaged in same-gender role, cross-gender role, and gender-role-neutral behaviors. A total of 120 children participated in the study: 60 first and second graders, and 60 fifth and sixth graders, with equal numbers of males and females in each grade. Children were told 24 stories which were equally divided into 8 different types of situations. Half of the stories depicted stereotypic desirable and undesirable male and female traits. The other half were gender-role neutral and depicted envy, fear, anger, and warmth. Each story was told to each child twice, once with a male and once with a female protagonist. Children were asked about the intensity of envy, fear, and warmth they experienced toward the story protagonist. They were also given measures of gender-typed personality traits and toy preferences, gender attitudes, and the Children's Social Desirability Scale (CSDS). The CSDS was used as a co-variate in all analyses. Findings indicated that children's feelings toward the same and opposite gender were multidetermined. These feelings were influenced by the biological gender of the children, the quality of their gender-typed traits and toy preferences, the biological gender and gender-typed traits of the person about whom they were experiencing the feelings, and the situation in which they were involved. (Author/RH)

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BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS ARE MORE SCARED OF BOYS THAN OF GIRLS

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Poster presented at the Biannual Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development in Baltimore, Maryland, April, 1987

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Abstract

The present study sought to explore feelings of envy, warmth, and fear that children experience toward boys and girls engaged in same gender role, cross gender role, and gender role neutral behaviors. One hundred twenty children participated in the study: 60 first and second graders, and 60 fifth and sixth graders, with equal numbers of males and females in each grade level.

Children were told 24 stories equally divided into 8 different types of situations: stories depicting male and female stereotypic desirable and undesirable traits, and gender-role neutral stories depicting envy, fear, anger, and warmth. Each story was told to each child twice: once with a male, and once with a female protagonist. Children were asked about the intensity of envy, fear, and warmth experienced toward the story protagonist, rated on a 4 point scale. Children were also given measures of gender typed personality traits and toy preferences, gender attitudes, and the Children's Social Desirability Scale (CSDS). The CSDS was used as a co-variate in all analyses.

Children's feelings toward the same and opposite gender were multi-determined, and were influenced by their biological gender and the quality of their gender typed traits and toy preferences, the biological gender and gender typed traits of the person about whom they were experiencing the feelings, and the situation in which they were involved. For example, the results revealed that both boys and girls were more scared of males than of females, especially when the situational context was frightening. In some situations, girls were more scared of both sexes than were boys. Girls scoring high on aggressive traits were less scared of boys, and both boys and girls who preferred to play with girls' toys were more scared of boys. Similar patterns are discussed for warmth and envy.

BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS ARE MORE SCARED OF BOYS THAN OF GIRLS

AIMS

1. Are there differences in the intensity of warmth/respect, fear, and envy that boys and girls experience toward male and female peers?

2. How do children's feelings about male and female peers differ when peers are engaged in same gender typed, cross gender typed, and gender role neutral behaviors? For example, how would children's feelings about a strong female differ from their feelings about a strong male?

3. How are boys' and girls' feelings toward same and opposite gender peers related to the following variables: age, gender typed personality traits and toy preferences, traditional vs. non-traditional attitudes toward female roles, and the quality of the affective situation in which they are participating?

METHOD

Subjects. One hundred twenty children participated in the present study, including 30 female (M age=7.45 years, sd=.66 years) and 30 male (M age = 7.62, s.d. = .66) first and second graders; and 30 female (M age = 11.51, s.d. =.60) and 30 male (M age= 11.65, s.d. = .71) fifth and sixth graders. They were drawn from twelve suburban schools in the greater Boston geographical area which were predominantly Caucasian in population and which represented a range of socioeconomic classes (range= 1 to 7 on the Hollingshead-Redlich Scale).

This paper is based on a larger project in which similar data were collected from the mothers and fathers of these children, and in which other emotions (anger, disgust, pity, and hurt) were explored in both the children and their parents.

Tasks.

1.Story Attribution Task.

Children were presented with 8 different sets of stories, with three stories in each of the sets, as follows: stories depicting female stereotyped undesirable traits,(i.e. instrumentally incompetent, weak, and passive); male stereotyped undesirable traits (i.e. bossy, rough, and teasing); female stereotyped desirable traits (i.e. neat, nurturant, and gentle); male stereotyped desirable traits (i.e. adventurous, brave, and strong); and four sets of stories depicting gender-role neutral situations designed to elicit the feelings of envy, fear, anger, and warmth/respect. Tables 1 and 2 give examples of stories used. All stories were pilot tested with 20 children and 20 adults to ensure that they elicited either the desired stereotype or the desired feeling, and stories were accepted with only a 75% agreement rate or higher.

Children were individually told each story twice in two sessions. The first and second sessions were separated by at least 24 hours. In one session, the story protagonists were female; in the other session, the story protagonists were male. Thus, for example, children's feelings about a strong female vs. a strong male, or a nurturant female vs. a nurturant male could be compared. The order in which male vs. female story protagonists was presented was counterbalanced within age x gender groups. In order to minimize socially desirable responses, the task was made more projective, and children were not asked about how they themselves would feel about the story protagonist, but rather female subjects were asked how a girl named Mary would feel, while male subjects were asked how a boy named John would feel about the story protagonists. Children were shown a picture of the story while it was being told, and were asked about the intensity of feelings of envy, fear, and

warmth/respect after story presentations. Characters in the stories were drawn to be gender- neutral, and the same picture was shown to the child for the two different story presentations. Sample pictures are displayed in Figure 1. Emotions were asked about as follows: Envy: Would Mary/ John wish that s/he could be (brave) like _____ because s/he's not so (brave)?/ Fear: Would Mary/John be scared of _____? Warmth/ respect: Would Mary/John like_____and feel that s/he was a good person? If children said yes to any of the questions, they were asked whether they would feel that way a little, some, or alot, thus generating a 4 point scale: no, a little, some, or alot. Intensities were explained to the children before the task began using pictures of facial expressions that demonstrated three different intensities.

2. Children's Social Desirability Questionnaire (CSDS) Crandall, Crandall & Katkovsky, 1965). A modified and shortened version of this true-false self report scale was administered in order to assess children's tendency to respond in socially desirable ways.

3. Children's Personality Attributes Questionnaire (CPAQ) (Hall and Halberstadt, 1981). This self-report measure (which was modified and shortened for use in the present study) consists of three scales:

a. Masculinity scale (M): masculine stereotyped traits which are socially desirable in both genders, such as independence and leadership.

b. Femininity scale (F): feminine stereotyped traits which are socially desirable in both genders, such as warmth and friendliness.

c. Masculinity - femininity scale (MF): traits which are socially desirable for either gender but not both, such as emotional vulnerability and aggressiveness.

4. Children's Attitudes Toward Women Scale (CAWS). (Hall, 1976). The modified version of the CAWS used in the present study is a self-report true-false inventory which assesses the extent to which children endorse stereotypic beliefs about men's and women's roles.

5. Self-labelled gender typed toy preferences. After each of the two testing sessions, children were allowed to choose a toy prize. Before children were allowed to view the prizes (which were different each session), they were asked whether they would prefer a prize that was for boys, for girls, or one that was for both boys and girls. Children's responses were coded into one of two categories: those children who said they wanted same gender toys both times (gender role stereotyped children); and those who said any other combination of responses (androgynous children). Children's actual selection of toys was irrelevant to this measure.

SCORING AND ANALYSES

For the story attribution task, within each of the 8 story types, the intensity scores for each emotion (ranging from 0 to 4) were averaged across the three stories depicting that story type. This generated 48 variables: three emotions for each of eight story types for both male and female protagonists. These variables were initially correlated with social desirability scores using two-tailed Pearson r correlations, and because several significant correlations were obtained, each child's social desirability score was used as a co-variate in three repeated measures ANCOVAs which are described next. For each of the three emotions, a 2 (age) x 2 (gender) x 2(gender of story protagonist) x 8 (story type) repeated measures analysis of co-variance was run using the averaged 4 point intensity scale for each emotion as the dependent measure, and using social desirability scores as the co-variate. Newman Keuls post-hoc analyses were run to test for significant

differences among means in interaction effects. (All means reported below are adjusted for social desirability scores).

Next, six variables: the average intensity of fear, envy, and warmth experienced toward male and female protagonists across all story types were used as the outcome variables in 12 multiple regression analyses, with six analyses run for each gender. (For example, one of the 12 outcome variables would be the average fear which boys experienced toward female protagonists across all 24 stories in which a female protagonist appeared). Predictor variables in each multiple regression analysis were: social desirability scores, CAWS scores, age, self labelled gender toy preference scores, and three variables from the CPAQ: M, F, and MF scores. In order to control for the variance accounted for by social desirability scores, these scores were forced first into each regression, while other variables were entered according to their explanatory power.

RESULTS[1]

1. Both age groups of boys and girls were more scared of boys than they were of girls across all story situations (main effect for protagonist: $F(1,115)= 8.81$, $p<.01$: male protagonists $X=.52$, $sd=.27$; female protagonists: $X=.46$, $sd =.28$).

2. Boys were scarier than girls in both the gender-role neutral fear situations (male protagonists $X= 2.12$, $sd=.88$; female protagonists: $X=1.86$, $sd=.89$; Newman Keuls $p<.001$); and when acting in male stereotyped, undesirable ways: (male protagonists $X= 1.12$, $sd =.89$; female protagonists $X= 1.04$, $sd=.85$; Newman-Keuls, $p=.05$). (Protagonist X story type interaction: $F(7,811)= 5.13$, $p<.001$).

3. Both age groups of girls reported more fear across all stories (X females $=.54$, $sd=.25$) than did boys (X for males = .44, sd = .28; $F(1,115)=5.57$, $p=.02$), and especially in the gender role neutral fear situations and in the male stereotyped, undesirable situations ($F(7,811) = 7.23$, $p<.001$: (Fear situations: girls $X = 2.26$, $sd=.79$; boys $X = 1.72$, $sd=.93$; Male undesirable situations: girls $X= 1.23$, $sd= .85$; boys $X=.93$, $sd=.86$).

4. Both boys and girls were more envious of males with female desirable characteristics (nurturant, gentle, and neat) than of females with these characteristics ($F(7,811)=3.95$, $p<.001$; male protagonists $X= 2.22$, $sd=.76$; female protagonists $X = 2.05$, $sd= .78$); and were more envious of females with male desirable characteristics than of males with these characteristics (male protagonists $X = 2.01$, $sd= .80$; female protagonists $X= 2.15$, $sd=.76$).

5. Girls were more envious of both genders depicted with female desirable characteristics than were boys: $F(7,811)=4.05$, $p<.001$ (girls $X = 2.33$, $sd=.70$, boys $X =1.95$, $sd=.86$), but there were no gender differences in the intensity of envy experienced toward characters with male desirable characteristics.

6. Girls also felt more warmly toward both female desirable and female undesirable characteristics than did boys ($F (7,811)=3.60$, $p <.001$; (female desirable traits: girls $X= 2.67$, $sd = .44$; boys $X = 2.30$, $sd=.62$; female undesirable traits: girls $X = 2.42$, $sd = .58$; boys, $X= 2.10$, $sd= ,67$), but there were no gender differences in the intensity of warmth experienced toward male desirable characteristics.

7. Both boys and girls felt more warmly toward characters with female desirable and undesirable traits than toward characters with male desirable traits $F(7,811)=759.53$, $p<.001$ (X for female desirable traits: 2.49, sd = .52; undesirable traits: 2.26, sd= .63; male desirable traits: 1.91, sd=.69).

8. In stories depicting female desirable traits, girls felt more warmly toward girls than boys; while boys felt more warmly toward boys than girls ($F(7,811)=2.39, p=.02$; for girls: female protagonists $X=2.70$, $sd = .48$; male protagonists $X= 2.57, sd=.56$; for boys: female protagonists $X=2.25, sd=.75$; male protagonists $X=2.42, sd=.65$).

9. For girls, four of the six regression equations were significant (see Tables 3 and 4).

a. The higher the girl's masculinity score, the more she envied both males and females. Trends were also seen such that girls with higher MF scores (emotionally invulnerable and aggressive) envied other girls more than did those with lower MF scores.

b. Girls who preferred to play with girls' toys were more scared of boys than were girls who preferred to play with androgynous toys.

c. Girls with high scores on the MF scale were less scared of boys than girls with low scores on the MF scale ($p=.051$).

d. The higher their scores on both F and MF scales, the higher the warmth girls felt toward boys.

e. Average warmth toward boys was also related to CAWS scores: the less traditional (the more pro-feminist) girls' attitudes toward female roles were, the less warmly they felt toward boys.

10. For boys, four of the six regression equations were significant (see Tables 5 and 6).

a. The higher the CPAQ masculinity score, the more boys envied males across all stories.

b. Boys with androgynous toy preferences were more scared of other boys than were boys with gender stereotyped (male) toy preferences.

c. The higher the masculinity score, the more warmly boys felt toward males.

d. The average warmth experienced toward females was related to scores on the femininity scale: the more feminine traits the boy had, the more warmly he felt toward girls.

CONCLUSIONS

1. In general, children's feelings toward the same and opposite gender were multi-determined, and were influenced by their biological gender and the quality of their gender typed traits and toy preferences, the biological gender and gender typed traits of the person about whom they were experiencing the feelings, and the situation in which they were involved (cf. Brody, 1985).

2. Both boys and girls were more scared of boys than of girls, and girls reported more fear than boys, specifically in stories depicting male stereotyped undesirable traits and gender role neutral fear situations. This may be because boys are associated with aggressive behaviors, and both boys and girls may fear resulting physical harm. Girls who had aggressive traits themselves (high MF scores) were less scared of boys than other girls, and both boys and girls who preferred to play with girls' toys (which may be used in less aggressive play) feared boys more than did other children, supporting the idea that fear of aggression may underlie the greater fear of boys than of girls.

3. Girls felt more warmly toward and envious of female traits than did boys, and both boys and girls felt more warmly toward female traits than toward male traits. It may be that children's warmth toward female traits reflects early socialization practices which value female stereotyped traits in children. There was only one situation in which both boys and girls felt more warmly

toward children of their own biological gender than the opposite gender (as distinct from gender typed traits): when both boys and girls were characterized with female desirable traits.

4. Within each gender, children's gender-typed personality traits significantly related to the intensity of warmth and envy they reported.

a. The results for boys suggest that feelings are related to gender role identification patterns: the gender with whom boys identify is the gender about whom they feel the most warmly and whom they wish to be like.

1. Boys with more feminine traits felt more warmly toward girls than did boys with less feminine traits; whereas boys with more masculine traits felt more warmly toward boys than did boys with less masculine traits.

2. Boys who scored higher on masculinity envied boys more than those who scored lower on masculinity.

b. For girls, having gender typed traits did not relate to the feelings of warmth and envy toward that gender as clearly as it did in boys.

1. Feminine girls and emotionally invulnerable, aggressive girls (high MF scorers) felt more warmly toward boys than did other types of girls, perhaps because girls high on the MF scale are identifying with boys, while girls scoring high on femininity are those who describe themselves to be kind, warm, and nurturing.

2. Girls high on masculinity envied both boys and girls more than did girls who were low on masculinity. Girls high on MF envied other girls. Such masculine, cross-gender stereotyped girls may identify with both genders and wish to be like both. Alternatively, perhaps these girls feel somewhat different than both boys and other girls: e.g. not quite as masculine as boys and more masculine than other girls, envying both.

5. Both boys and girls envied boys with female desirable traits (neat, nurturant, gentle) and girls with male desirable traits (strong, brave, and adventurous). In other words, both boys and girls wished to be like their more androgynous peers. Envy of androgyny may reflect an adaptation to changing cultural gender roles, i.e. children wish to conform to what are the current idealized gender role standards.

Footnote

1. Many of the analyses yielded significant effects for age and for interactions of other variables with age. These developmental findings are not reported in the present paper due to space limitations.

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Table 1
SAMPLE GENDER ROLE STEREOTYPED STORIES

Female socially desirable: This child takes care of his/her friends when they're not feeling well. S/he tries to make them feel better and cheer them up, and hugs them to let them know that s/he likes them. (nurturant)

Female socially undesirable: This child wishes that s/he could build a model plane, but s/he can't figure out how to do it. S/he can't get the pieces to fit together right.(instrumentally incompetent)

Male socially desirable: This child is really strong. S/he has really big arm muscles, and if anyone asks her to carry something heavy, it's really easy for her/him to do it. (strong)

Male socially undesirable: This child likes to tumble around alot and to play rough games, and sometimes hits and kicks other kids in a game. S/he also sometimes breaks toys because s/he plays with them in such a rough way. (rough)

Table 2
SAMPLE GENDER ROLE NEUTRAL STORIES

FEAR : John/Mary is playing alone in his/her room at night and suddenly notices that a strange boy/girl is outside his window and is watching him/her. S/he doesn't know what the boy/girl is going to do next.

ENVY: This child always gets lots of money to buy candy bars and sodas and Mary/John never does.

WARMTH/RESPECT: This child made a lemonade stand and sells lots of lemonade. S/he wants to give the money to help poor people.

ANGER: John/Mary just built the best sandcastle that s/he ever made. This child walked along the beach and purposely stepped on it.

Table 3

MULTIPLE REGRESSION EQUATIONS FOR ENVY TOWARD MALE AND FEMALE PROTAGONISTS IN GIRLS

Average envy toward male protagonists: $F(7,52)=2.95$, $p=.01$
Average envy toward female protagonists: $F(7,52)=2.39$, $p=.03$.

Variables	Beta		r		t-test	
	Gender of Story Protagonists					
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
CSDS	-.30	-.05	-.23	-.09	-2.08*	- .32
Age	-.25	-.15	-.21	-.21	-1.72	-1.02
M Scale	.28	.36	.33	.27	2.10*	2.61*
MF Scale	.15	.25	.17	.22	1.21	1.95
F Scale	.16	-.04	.17	-.05	1.18	-. 29
Toy pref	-.14	-.09	-.10	-.09	-1.14	- .76
CAWS	-.17	-.26	-.06	-.19	-1.15	-1.73

*p<.05; df=52 for each variable.

Table 4

MULTIPLE REGRESSION EQUATIONS FOR FEAR AND WARMTH TOWARD MALE PROTAGONISTS IN GIRLS

Average fear toward male protagonists: $F(7,52)=2.91$, $p=.01$
Average warmth toward male protagonists: $F(7,52)=2.76$, $p=.02$

Variables	Beta		r		t-test	
	Type of Story (All Male Protagonists)					
	Fear	Warmth	Fear	Warmth	Fear	Warmth
CSDS	-.33	.12	-.28	.23	-2.30*	.80
Age	-.12	.06	.10	-.22	- .83	.41
M Scale	.08	-.11	.25	-.16	.57	- .84
MF Scale	-.25	.34	-.17	.20	-2.00	2.71**
F Scale	.13	.38	.09	.26	.89	2.67*
Toy pref	-.32	-.01	-.30	.06	-2.60*	- .10
CAWS	.15	-.30	.22	-.20	1.06	-2.06*

*=p<.05; **=p<.001;df=52 for each variable

Key to multiple regression tables

CSDS = Children's Social Desirability Scales. High scores = children presenting themselves in a socially desirable light.
Age = younger children=1; older children = 2
M Scale = Masculinity Scale of CPAQ; high scores = more masculine traits
MF Scale = Masculinity-femininity Scale of CPAQ; high scores = children who are aggressive and emotionally invulnerable
F Scale = Femininity Scale of CPAQ; high scores = more feminine traits
Toy Pref= Self labelled gender typed toy preference measure. This was a categorical variable: 1=gender role stereotyped; 2=androgynous
CAWS = Children's Attitudes toward Women Scale. High scores = more pro-feminist attitudes

The order in which variables appear in each table does not necessarily reflect their significance.

Table 5

MULTIPLE REGRESSION EQUATIONS FOR WARMTH TOWARD MALE AND FEMALE PROTAGONISTS IN BOYS

Average warmth toward male protagonists: $F(7,52)=3.91$, $p=.02$
Average warmth toward female protagonists: $F(7,52)=3.60$, $p=.004$

Variables	Beta		r		t-test	
	Gender of Story Protagonists					
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
CSDS	-.02	.05	.19	.32	- .13	.33
Age	-.32	-.29	-.35	.34	-2.15*	-1.92
M Scale	.31	.06	.36	.11	2.61*	.47
MF Scale	-.12	-.22	-.21	-.32	-1.03	-1.82
F Scale	.20	.30	.30	.39	1.60	2.41*
Toy pref	.20	.11	.25	.21	1.66	.90
CAWS	.05	.03	-.15	-.12	.36	.23

*$p<.05$; $df=52$ for each of the variables.

Table 6

MULTIPLE REGRESSION EQUATIONS FOR ENVY AND FEAR TOWARD MALE PROTAGONISTS IN BOYS

Average envy of male protagonists: $F(7,52)=2.30$, $p<.05$
Average fear of male protagonists: $F(7,52)=2.30$, $p<.05$

Variables	Beta		r		t-test	
	Type of Story (All Male Protagonists)					
	Envy	Fear	Envy	Fear	Envy	Fear
CSDS	-.16	-.36	-.01	-.32	-1.09	-2.43*
Age	-.21	.08	-.19	.19	-1.30	.51
M Scale	.30	.08	.37	.14	2.33*	.61
MF Scale	-.05	.06	-.08	.05	- .41	.44
F Scale	.25	.23	.28	.14	1.86	1.76
Toy pref	.11	.27	.13	.23	.85	2.13*
CAWS	.01	-.04	-.10	.09	.03	- .24

*=$p<.05$; $df=52$ for each variable.

Key to multiple regression tables

CSDS = Children's Social Desirability Scales. High scores = children presenting themselves in a socially desirable light.
Age = younger children=1; older children = 2
M Scale = Masculinity Scale of CPAQ; high scores = more masculine traits
MF Scale = Masculinity-femininity Scale of CPAQ; high scores = children who are aggressive and emotionally invulnerable
F Scale = Femininity Scale of CPAQ; high scores = more feminine traits
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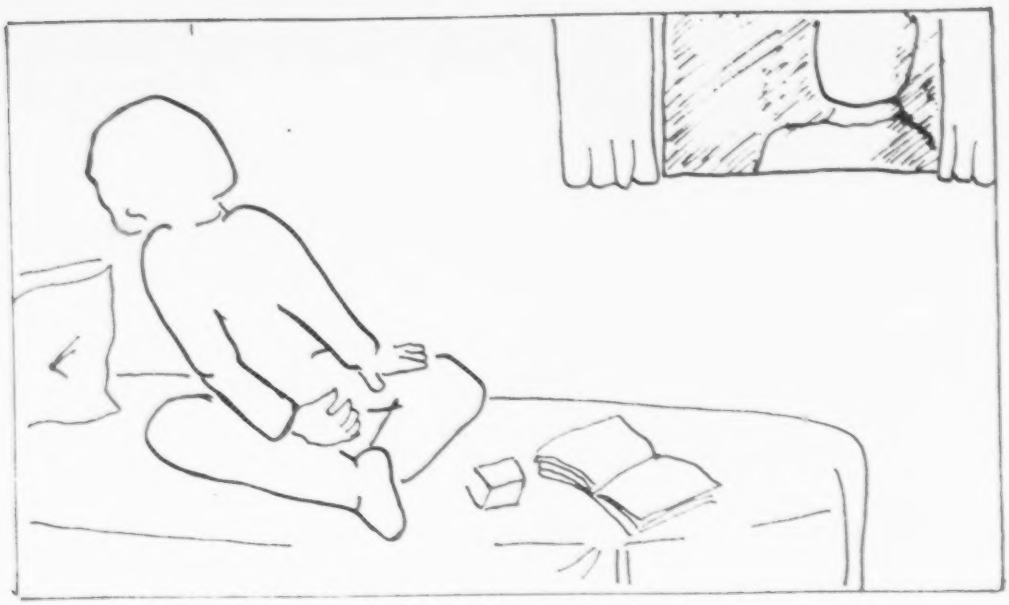
CAWS = Children's Attitudes toward Women Scale. High scores = more pro-feminist attitudes

The order in which variables appear in each table does not necessarily reflect their significance.

Figure 1. Sample Pictures



FEAR: John/ Mary is playing alone in his/her room at night and suddenly notices that a strange boy/girl is outside her/his window and is watching him/her.

ENVY: This child always gets lots of money to buy candy bars and sodas and Mary/John never does.